



United States Department of Agriculture

# IOWA CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS



**July 2014**

## *What's Inside?*

- 3 NRCS HAM  
Herbicide Carryover and  
Cover Crops
- 4 Rescue Nitrogen Applications  
Back in the Day
- 5 HR Corner  
Title VII Review  
RAGBRAI Success
- 6 Earth Team Highlight  
Video Spotlight: Conservation  
Planning
- 7 Personnel Actions

## A Message from the: **State Conservationist**



### 'Passion ... It Comes From the Heart'

Last week I attended the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Soil Health conference in Indianapolis, Indiana. Producers, partners, and specialists from across the nation provided support and testimony on soil health as an important part of our conservation efforts.

Chief Jason Weller talked about the agronomic/economic impact of soil and how the loss of productive soils has resulted in the decline of once thriving civilizations and its current role in the unrest in the middle east. A number of demonstrations showed the impacts of water on well-managed soils with high organic matter vs. low organic matter content.

One demo in particular caught my eye ... as water immediately entered the high organic matter soil in a water column, a low organic soil showed, at best, only superficial wetting. In fact, after the demonstration program I noticed that the water had still not saturated the low organic matter sample. I realized that if this is occurring across the Iowa landscape, precipitation is superficially infiltrating the soil and the excess is flowing down the slope, carrying with it soil particles and attached and unattached nutrients into lowlands and watercourses.

A panel of producers, averaging 30 years of building organic matter, gave testimony on the positive economic and resource benefits of cropping systems utilizing diverse cover crops and higher residue cropping systems; as well as the benefits from proper livestock grazing management on grasslands.

An agri-business panel also gave supportive testimony and shared current technology advancements. A representative from John Deere spoke to recent marketing on the value of cover crops and the company's advances in the development of conservation machinery. The passion displayed by all the presenters further convinced me that Iowa is progressing in the right direction with our own soil health initiative.

In closing, I will always remember the comment given by a producer/conservation planner ... "You can get the concept of soil health into your head, but until you get into your heart, it will not get out on the land".

Best Regards,



Jay T. Mar  
State Conservationist

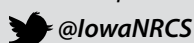
## IOWA CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

**Current Developments is a product of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service in Des Moines, Iowa, published bimonthly by the Iowa NRCS Public Affairs Staff in cooperation with NRCS and partner agency employees from across the state.**

### **Current Developments Stories and Photos**

*Please submit your Current Developments story ideas and photos to  
State Public Affairs Specialist  
Laura Crowell at [laura.crowell@ia.usda.gov](mailto:laura.crowell@ia.usda.gov).*

*Past issues can be found at [www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/currentdevelopments.html](http://www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov/intranet/currentdevelopments.html).*



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## NRCS HAM: Clint Miller Featured on Iowa Public Radio

Iowa Public Radio recently interviewed District Conservationist Clint Miller for a story about amateur radio operators. There are 800,000 licensed ham radio operators in North America with 6,619 of them in Iowa. You can listen to the story here: [iowapublicradio.org/post/amateur-radio-contests-encourage-emergency-preparedness](http://iowapublicradio.org/post/amateur-radio-contests-encourage-emergency-preparedness)



Clint Miller, KC0JUO, is the Emergency Coordinator with the Amateur Radio Emergency Service in Story County. He became interested in amateur radio after learning how it was used during Hurricane Katrina. Photo by John Pemble. Courtesy of Iowa Public Radio.

## PFI Research: Herbicide Carryover Injury to Cover Crops

Increased adoption of cover crops in corn-soybean production systems has led to concerns of injury to cover crops by carryover activity of commonly applied herbicides.

Four cover crop species were sown into Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI) plots with standing corn where one of seven common herbicides had been applied in spring.

### Key findings:

- Of the four cover crop species studied, winter cereal rye was the least affected by the herbicides included. Only the 2x rate of Dual II Magnum™ injured the rye.
- Farmers will want to avoid using the herbicides Balance Flexx™, Corvus™, and Hornet™ when looking to establish hairy vetch, lentil, and/or tillage radish as cover crops.
- Atrazine, Callisto™, and Laudis™ resulted in no significant injury to any of the cover



A hairy vetch seedling exhibiting bleaching symptoms from a Group 27 herbicide. Photo courtesy of Meaghan Bryan - Iowa State University.

### Web Link:

- [http://bit.ly/pfi\\_fieldcrops](http://bit.ly/pfi_fieldcrops)

## Nutrient Notes: Rescue Nitrogen Applications

The extreme late spring and early summer rains that occurred in parts of Iowa may have caused leaching or denitrification of soil nitrogen.

Some producers may have decided to apply a “rescue N application” of fertilizer. The Nutrient Management (590) Conservation Practice Standard allows for rescue nitrogen application if based on in-season tests including the Late Spring Soil Nitrate Test and the use of the SPAD meter to sense nitrogen deficiency.

Some producers may have based their rescue N application on a procedure described in John Sawyer’s Integrated Crop Management News article, *Estimating Nitrogen Losses in Wet Corn Fields*.

This would meet our standard as an ISU recommended alternative. The problem with rescue N applications is if they essentially become the nitrogen management plan. Rescue N should be used only when there is excessive rain causing leaching and saturated soils for an extended time.

Whenever rescue N is needed, the nutrient management plan should be evaluated to determine if the risk of leaching or denitrification can and should be reduced through other management options (e.g. different N sources, different time of application, cover crops, nitrification inhibitors, etc.)

-Submitted by Eric Hurley,  
Nutrient Management Specialist

## Back in the Day

This issue’s photo is courtesy of retired SCS employee Floyd Patterson. Here’s an interesting story from his cover letter:

“In 1948 the state was divided into groups of four counties called Work Groups. The supervisor was called the District Conservationist. The county was called the Work Unit and the person in charge was the Work Unit Conservationist or Farm Planner. The other employee was the Conservation Aid. There were no state employees. The office for my work group was in Oskaloosa.

I reported in June 1948 as a Farm Planner Trainee. I was to train one year and then move to another county. However, when my year was up, the Work Unit Conser-



*Conservation Aide Francis Argo stands near a dam built on the Max Johnson farm, Scott Township, Mahaska County, Fall 1948. The plans came from a Missouri bulletin.*

vationist decided to go back to college and I stayed. I was in Oskaloosa until 1977, when I retired.

I was also an Area Photographer toward the end of my career. I took photos for Mahaska, Marion,

Marshall, Monroe, Des Moines and Henry County Standard Soil Surveys. After retirement Lynn Betts had me take some photos, so I was an part of the Earth Team.”  
**THANK YOU FLOYD!**



## HR Corner

### Re-evaluate Your Insurance

Your working life can be divided into four stages: early career, when your adult life is beginning to take shape; mid-career, when you may have a growing family and increasing financial responsibilities; pre-retirement, when the kids may be grown and you have an empty nest; and retirement years, when you may have more health care needs and a fixed income, but fewer financial responsibilities.

The cost and needs for different types of insurance will change as you go through each phase, so it is important for you to re-evaluate your insurance needs. Here's a [calculator](#) to determine how much your Federal Employees Group Life Insurance is costing you. In addition to your life insurance it is important to evaluate your health insurance. Here's a [link](#) to compare different health plans. In order to continue life or health insurance into retirement, you must be enrolled for 5 years preceding retirement.

## Title VII: Gender Sterotyping and Discrimination

Although Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 does not explicitly include sexual orientation or gender identity, the EEOC and courts have said that sex discrimination includes discrimination because an applicant or employee does not conform to traditional gender stereotypes.

### TRANSGENDER STATUS

Discrimination against an individual because that person is transgender is, by definition, discrimination based on sex, and violates Title VII.

See *Macy v. Department of Justice*, EEOC Appeal No.0120120821 (April 20, 2012).

### SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Title VII protects gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals against sex discrimination, which includes adverse actions taken because of a person's failure to conform to sex or gender stereotypes. See *Veretto v. U.S. Postal Service*, EEOC Appeal No. 0120110873 (July 1, 2011); *Castello v. U.S. Postal Service*, EEOC Request No.0520110649 (Dec. 20, 2011).

## RAGBRAI Project: 12th Year a Success!

Special thanks to all those who helped out with this year's RAGBRAI conservation outreach project, which is a partnership of NRCS, SWCS, DSC, and local conservation districts.

**Site Scouts:** Laura Crowell and Duane Miller

**Van Masters:** Sheila Cox and Jason Johnson

**Team Lead Recruiter:** Amy Bouska

**Team Leaders:** Sharyl Anderson, Emily Funk, Karen Fynaardt, Dean Gronemeyer, Lori Lewis and Matt Welsch

And all the folks who worked at a tent site and/or helped us find a site.

The project was cut short by one day because of poor weather, but we still distributed 2,800 pounds of bananas and mailed 4,000 conservation-themed postcards.



*Volunteers for the RAGBRAI stop near Fenton. Top row (left to right) Van Master Sheila Cox, Connie Zittritsch, Jim Antoine, Allison Rooney, Brian Tumey Bottom Row: Doug Adams, Nick Davis, Emily Funk, Randy Hurlburt (site owner).*

## Welcome Aboard: **Fernando Vazquez**

This month Area 5 welcomed new employee to Fernando Vazquez, Soil Conservationist at the Davenport Field Office. Fernando has an undergraduate degree in Horticultural Science and is working on his Master's Degree in Soil Science.

He worked as an NRCS summer trainee in Ohio, South Dakota, and Maine. He is a native of Cayey, Puerto Rico.

He shares our passion for nature and is excited to be part of a team that works to conserve the natural resources.

*Submitted by Lane Collins  
AST-FO, Fairfield AO*

A video thumbnail with a dark blue background. In the center, there is a bright, glowing light source with rays emanating from it. Overlaid on this background is the text 'Working with NRCS to' in a smaller font, followed by 'DEVELOP YOUR' and 'CONSERVATION PLAN' in large, bold, white capital letters. There are also some abstract, semi-transparent blue and white geometric shapes in the background.

Working with NRCS to  
**DEVELOP YOUR  
CONSERVATION PLAN**

## Video Spotlight: **Conservation Planning Video**

Iowa Public Affairs recently worked with the Adel Field Office to develop this new video explaining how NRCS works with farmers to develop a conservation plan. The video is featured on the Iowa NRCS YouTube Channel: [CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPYZIHQ\\_41TbjpLs63tG7sQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPYZIHQ_41TbjpLs63tG7sQ)

## Changes In: NRCS Personnel

Name	Official Title	Nature Of Action	Effective Date	Location
BERNDT, ABBY JO	SC	NAME CHANGE TO BELTZ	6/22/14	AREA 4 OSCEOLA
FREDERIKSEN, ROSS	SCT	NEW HIRE	7/27/14	AREA 1 STORM LAKE
JULIA VAZQUEZ, FERNANDO	SC	NEW HIRE	7/27/14	AREA 5 DAVENPORT
GILLES, CHAD	OFFICE ASST	PROMOTION	6/15/14	AREA 3 WEST UNION
HARMAN, MICHELLE	OFFICE ASST	PROMOTION	6/15/14	AREA 1 SIOUX CITY
ADKINS, MARTIN	ASTC-SPECIAL PROJECTS	REASSIGNMENT	7/27/14	STATE OFFICE DES MOINES
COUCHMAN, TROY	SC	REASSIGNMENT	6/15/14	AREA 4 MOUNT AYR
ANDERSON, ORVIS	SCT	RESIGNATION	7/17/14	AREA 1 SPIRIT LAKE
ELLIS, JUSTINA	SCT	RESIGNATION	6/12/14	AREA 1 ROCKWELL CITY
FEHSEKE, MARK	DC	RETIREMENT VOLUNTARY	6/2/14	AREA 4 CORYDON
LEWITKE, MICHAEL	SC	RETIREMENT VOLUNTARY	5/31/14	AREA 2 KNOXVILLE
OSWALD, THEODORE	ETC	RETIREMENT VOLUNTARY	5/31/14	AREA 5 WILLIAMSBURG
SINDT, JERRY	SC	RETIREMENT VOLUNTARY	5/31/14	AREA 1 SERGEANT BLUFF
STIEGELMEIER, ADAM	ASTC-M	NHQ DETAIL	7/27/14	STATE OFFICE DES MOINES
SELENSKE, JOHN	ACTING ASTC-M	DETAIL NTE 120 DAYS	7/27/14	STATE OFFICE DES MOINES
DRECHSEL, MATTHEW	ACTING SRC	DETAIL NTE 60 DAYS	7/20/14	STATE OFFICE DES MOINES
FINLEY, JERED	ACTING ASTC-FO	DETAIL NTE 90 DAYS	7/19/14	AREA 3 WEST UNION

## Changes In: DSC Personnel

### *In order of Effective Date*

Name	Title	Nature of Action	Effective Date	Location
Robert Gray	Soil Technician	New Employee	6/11/2014	Plymouth SWCD
Mary Adkins	Secretary	Retirement	7/7/2014	Lee SWCD

### **Central Office Changes:**

Ryan Starkey, Environmental Specialist,  
New Employee, 5/23/2014;  
ryan.starkey@iowaagriculture.com; 515-242-5003

District Office Address Change:  
Linn SWCD  
891 62nd St  
Marion, IA 52302

When mailing into the Division of Soil Conservation please use this format:

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
DIVISION OF SOIL CONSERVATION  
502 E 9TH ST  
WALLACE STATE OFFICE BLDG  
DES MOINES IA 50319

If you need to send to someone directly then you would put:

NAME OF PERSON  
IOWA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
DIVISION OF SOIL CONSERVATION  
502 E 9TH ST, WALLACE STATE OFFICE BLDG  
DES MOINES IA 50319